

## NEWS RELEASE



6013 Lakeside Boulevard  
Indianapolis, IN 46278  
[www.in.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov)

### USDA Announces Fiscal Year 2009 Sign-up for \$20 Million in Conservation Innovation Grants

INDIANAPOLIS, January 26, 2009—The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced the availability of program funding for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) for fiscal year 2009. The CIG program is designed to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies.

"CIG projects give us an opportunity to try new and innovative conservation approaches," said NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty. "This competitive grant program helps us advance environmental goals that also contribute to and protect local economies."

For FY 2009, up to \$20 million is available for the national CIG competition. Funds for single- or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, will be awarded through a nationwide competitive grants process from all eligible non-government organizations or individuals, including federally recognized tribes.

FY 2009 CIG categories are:

- **Natural Resource Concerns Category**—up to \$5 million available for proposals addressing one or more of the CIG natural resource concerns
- **Technology Category**—up to \$6 million available for proposals addressing one or more of the CIG technology categories
- **Grant Leveraging Category**—up to \$4 million to pilot the leveraging of CIG grants projects that provide further grants that align with the purposes of CIG
- **Chesapeake Bay Watershed Category**—up to \$5 million available for proposals addressing one or more of the CIG natural resource concerns in the Chesapeake Bay watershed

Funding for CIG is made available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). All proposed CIG projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers. CIG is not a research program, but rather a tool to stimulate the adoption of conservation approaches or technologies that have been studied sufficiently to indicate a high likelihood of success, and are likely candidates for eventual technology transfer.

CIG will fund projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. Technologies and approaches that are commonly used in the geographic area covered by the application, and which are eligible for funding through EQIP, are not eligible for funding through CIG.

Grants for approved projects cannot exceed 50 percent of the total project cost. At least 50 percent of the total cost of the project must come from non-federal matching funds (cash and in-kind contributions) provided by the grantee. While NRCS will provide technical oversight for each project receiving an award, the grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully complete the project.

Applications must be received in the NRCS National Headquarters by close of business **March 2, 2009**. Applications should be sent to: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Innovation Grants Program; Financial Assistance Programs Division, Room 5239-S; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; Washington, DC 20250. To view the complete Announcement of Program Funding, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/>. Visit <http://www.grants.gov/> to apply electronically.

For more information about NRCS conservation programs, visit <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/> or the nearest USDA Service Center in your area. Location of USDA Service Centers can be found at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

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Contacts:

Jane E. Hardisty, NRCS State Conservationist, (317) 290-3200  
Michael McGovern, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist, (317) 290-3200, ext. 324

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